

Mushrooms might be key to Stradivarius Sound

If the violin sounds good, it might be the mushrooms. A Swiss researcher announced that treating maple wood with a certain mushroom improves its sound quality.

Speaking at a conference in Basel, Switzerland, Francis Schwarze said his maple violin, a replica of a 1698 instrument made by the Italian master Antonio Stradivari, has a sound comparable to the elusive timbre of a Stradivarius, according to a report from Agence France-Press.

Schwarze, of the Zurich-based Federal Materials, Science and Technology Institute, treated the wood with *Xylaria longipes*, a mushroom that grows on the bark of trees. The mushroom nibbles lightly on the wood, reducing its density and intensifying the sound, he said.

"It has a very good sound and also carries well," violin maker Michael Rhonheimer said at the Swiss Innovation Forum in Basel.

Many researchers believe the unmatched sound of Stradivarius violins comes partly from the instruments' age.

Researchers have studied the density of the wood, the quality of the finishes and the shape of the violins and other string instruments made by the Stradivari family in an effort to determine why their sound is so rich. As of yet, the sound has proved irreproducible.

Because of the high value placed on the violins, which can sell for more than \$1 million, numerous con artists have tried to pass off other instruments as Stradivariuses.

Thanks to Jean Johnson with the SVIMS for sharing this article, originally published at www.cbc.ca/arts/music/story/2008/11/07/mushroom-violins.html.



President's Message

As I write this, I look out the window and feel spring fever. Perhaps a very short winter? Global warming?

Change to Meeting Schedule: we are changing the familiar meeting schedule. No longer will all meetings occur on the evening of the first Monday of each month. Attendance records for the past several years reflect low attendance (six or seven attendees, most of whom are members of the Board of Directors), for certain months, so we'll hold fewer meetings and schedule those for the months where attendance has been greater, e.g. – *no February meeting.*

And, recognizing that a significant number of members live in northern NM, we again plan to hold some meetings in Santa Fe, tentatively on Sunday afternoons. Please check the schedule published on our Website and in this newsletter.

Another change: we'll begin the meetings with the program, then have a short refreshment break, and then conduct a brief business meeting. Kindly respect the time of the person who is presenting the program. If you're late, we won't wait. First 2009 meeting will begin at 7 p.m. on March 2 at the NM Museum of Natural History multi-purpose room – main floor, take a left after entering through glass doors on east side of building. Check it out!

Meanwhile, Vice-President Dave Wallis is developing the programs for all of our 2009 meetings, Foray Chair Libba Campbell is aggressively planning and organizing arrangements for the 2009 event, and we continue to progress in

our project of developing "Best Recognition Features" for the NMMS mushroom slides.

On behalf of the entire membership, I want to publicly recognize and sincerely thank those who so well served NMMS during 2008. Each person contributed immensely:

- Spencer Campbell, President
- Jonathan Caldwell, Vice-President
- Sharon Chong, Treasurer
- Rich Therrien, Member At Large
- Terri Wallis, Newsletter editor
- Libba Campbell, Foray Chair
- Dave Wallis, Hospitality, Audiovisual support, and, as always, thoughtfully wrapping up loose ends

Lastly, I ask that you please consider responding affirmatively to requests for volunteers to contribute and accept a share of the responsibility for the continuing operations of the organization. I'm confident that you'll enjoy the camaraderie and learn from the experience.

I join you in anticipating good hunting in 2009.

Respectfully, Mark Kalin

Annual Foray

The 2009 NMMS foray will return to the Best Western Kachina Lodge in Taos, August 20-24 or 25. Vera Evenson will be our featured mycologist, and she will help us set up our own vouchering system, which will become a component of future NMMS forays. Vouchering provides a scientific record of collected specimens that removes the ambiguity of species lists and supports future research or inquiries.

We are pleased to announce that the Herbarium of the Museum of Southwestern Biology at UNM will store our vouchered specimens, where they will be available for referral and examination.

You may have noticed some ambiguity in the end dates of the foray. For most attendees the foray will end on Sunday the 23rd, as usual, after the mycologists' walk-through. Those interested in microscopy and vouchering will stay longer to help identify and preserve the collected specimens. As we can't predict whether '09 will be a Sipapu (dry) or a Los Alamos (wet) year, we can't say exactly when the vouchering will end. So if you wish to participate in this aspect of the foray, be prepared to stay until at least Monday the 24th and possibly Tuesday the 25th. Mark your calendars!

Libba Campbell, Foray Chair

Remembering Ann Floyd

When writing Christmas letters, I saw that I had no longer Ann's mailing address and sent her an e-mail. Failure to deliver.... I checked your club's archive and learned of her death.

It is comforting to me that the newsletter carried such a vivid likeness of Ann, accompanied by the little narrative that ties her to Pilze, as well as the very kind appreciation of her gifts.

When Ann and I first met, we related through the common heritage of a beloved father who took us out into Nature and showed us the mushrooms. My father, too, would not let war injury hold him back: With one stiff leg, immobilized at the knee, he slugged through woods and mountainous terrain to hunt, and thereby taught his daughters to follow their passion. And look where it led us!

Truly, by her actions and her essence she survives in memory, kind and generous, brave in struggle - her father's worthy daughter. I am sad that she is gone.

For a number of years, I was able to join your annual forays. They furnished me with a

goodly stash of fine mushroom memories, mainly for the outstanding human experience with your membership and guests. For this I thank you and some others - some still with you, some gone - who shared their hospitable spirit.

With season's greetings, best wishes for the new year, and hoping to once again walk the beautiful woods of northern New Mexico with you.

Anneliese Unterharnscheidt

Don't Forget our Website

NMMS' Website, www.mycowest.org, is now entering its 13th year. The site offers PDF versions of all *Mycorizon* issues, as well as earlier issues of the NMMS News back through 1996.

Members may access a directory (folder) containing Contact Lists. This requires a username and password, which I change each Spring and which I distribute via email, so it is important that I have members' current email addresses. The message will come from dwallis@mycowest.org, so those with spam blocking should allow mail from this address.

Meetings for 2009

Mark mentioned in his President's Message that we have opted for fewer meetings this year. Our plan is to space the meetings roughly 6 weeks apart and alternate between Albuquerque



Ann Floyd 1942-2006

and Santa Fe.

Our first meeting will be on March 2nd in Albuquerque at the Natural History Museum. The meeting will begin promptly at 7pm. Spencer Campbell will relate his and Libba's experiences at December's GSMS Foray in Louisiana

Our second meeting will be in Santa Fe on Sunday, April 19th, at Barbara Hays' clubhouse, beginning at 2pm. A map and directions are available on our Website and will be included in the next issue of the *Mycorizon*.

The third meeting will be in Albuquerque on June 1st, and we will return to Santa Fe for a meeting in mid-July. We will have no meetings in February or May.

Please visit the Website for Meeting dates and Program details. I also expect to have more concise information the March-April issue of the *Mycorizon*.

Mycorizon 2009

My goal is to keep the our newsletter alive for at least another year. However, we will have only six issues per year, rather than one a month as we have published in the past.

I encourage submissions from members, and have a few guidelines and requests:

- Submission deadlines are the 20th of each odd-numbered month (Jan, Mar, etc.)
- Articles should arrive in electronic format (email message or attachment works well).
- Aim for approx 250 words (no minimum--500 word maximum)
- I enjoy receiving emailed links to websites and articles clipped from newspapers, but I probably won't have the time to incorporate these into our publication.
- Keep in mind the concept of copyright. If you submit somebody else's work, remember that the author's permission is required before re-printing it in this publication.

David Wallis
Webmaster, Editor, Vice-President

NMMS SHOPPING

David Arora's *Mushrooms Demystified*
*MP \$27.00 **NMP 30.00

David Arora's *All that the Rain Promises....*
*M \$13.00 / **N \$15.00

Vera Stucky Evenson's *Mushrooms of Colorado and the Southern Rocky Mountains*
M \$15.00 / N \$17.00

Toadstool's Interactive CD
The Secret Lives of Mushrooms
M \$15.00 / N \$17.00

Orson K. Miller Jr. & Hope H. Miller's
North American Mushrooms:
A field guide to edible and inedible fungi
M \$20.00 / N \$23.00

**Books available at meetings
or contact Terri Wallis at**
505-262-0830 or twallis@swcp.com

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The purpose of NMMS is to advance the understanding and stimulate interest in the field of mycology.